



SRI LANKA

STATEMENT

By

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Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka

To the United Nations

At the

Security Council Meeting

On

Women and Peace and Security

New York

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(Please check against delivery)

Mr. President,

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security adopted five years ago is a landmark achievement. The review of its implementation is of immense importance to the international community, for the reason that, as we deliberate on this important subject, millions of women and children in all parts of the World still remain mired in disease, poverty and adverse effects of terrorism.

The Resolution 1325 was a result of the increasing realisation of the need to address grave and systematic violations of human rights of women and children in situations of armed conflict as well as the recognition of the capacity of women and the contribution that they can make in peace building. While the General Assembly, the Commission of Human Rights and the Commission of the Status of Women have addressed these issues from time to time, the Security Council, the UN apex body that is mandated to ensure international peace and security, by this Resolution provided an impetus to mainstream gender perspective in promoting peace and security.

Today, women and children account for the majority of civilians adversely affected by armed conflict and are subjected to grave violations of human rights as well as violence at the hands of repressive elements. Both in situations of armed conflict as well as during war-to-peace transitions and in peace-building phases, women's needs are rarely addressed with the seriousness that they deserve. In all such situations, it has been observed that women are more vulnerable and invariably suffer most. It is partly a direct result of violence targeted against them. It is often due to uneven share of responsibility women have in running the household, caring for children and even earning a living for the family as war widows. In many situations, a level playing field in terms of gender parity still remains beyond the reach of women.

The effect of armed conflict on the girl-child has been a grave concern in Sri Lanka for sometime. Recruitment of children including girls to the ranks of an armed group in the conflict in Sri Lanka is a continuing worry for our people. The armed group, LTTE, in gross violation of its commitments, continues such recruitment. This affects women, in general, who are the primary care givers in most families. Children, in particular, girls, being affected by armed conflict cannot and should not be allowed to continue by the civilised world and imposition of targeted actions against the perpetrators of such crimes is a paramount necessity.

In our view, for any national or international action plan to be more effective and result-oriented, it should be evolved through a process of

consultation with the civil society and other relevant actors, and should contain time-bound set of targets with monitoring and reporting mechanisms. The Government of Sri Lanka supports such processes, world wide, and also as part of its national approach towards peace and reconciliation.

In this context, we view Security Council Resolution 1325 as a ground-breaking initiative. The resolution sets-forth responsibilities that should be borne by the international community and Member States of the UN to ensure gender perspective and security for women in its multi-dimensional aspects related to peace, security and peace building.

Against this backdrop, it has now become incumbent upon the Security Council to review the progress made in the implementation of its resolution, as well as to consider further practical measures to strengthen the safety-net and security for women in situations of armed conflict and to promote their role in peace-building. In doing so, it is essential that the Security Council consider the following important measures;

- 1) To establish a focal point to ensure the integration of Resolution 1325 in the work programme of the Security Council as well as in the mandates, processes and mechanisms of all relevant UN Agencies.
- 2) To request the Secretary-General to update, monitor and review the UN System-wide Action Plan, on an annual basis.
- 3) To determine means by which the Security Council could be systematically informed of the use of gender-biased violence by parties to armed conflict.

It is timely that the United Nations re-doubled its efforts in taking immediate coherent, co-ordinated actions to translate the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as in the Security Council Resolution 1325.

My delegation will fully support all such efforts in manifestation of Sri Lanka's commitment towards protection of women and children in armed conflict and more importantly to further our belief in the value of the participation of women in peace-making and peace-building processes.

May I conclude by reminding ourselves of the words of Madam Eleanor Roosevelt; *"It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in. And it isn't enough to believe in. One must work at it."*